

Claims

- [c1] 1. A method for use with a system storing digital media records and comprising a search engine searching said stored digital media records, the method comprising the steps of:
- receiving search requests from users;
 - logging the search requests;
 - expanding the search requests;
 - applying a statistical clustering algorithm, thereby grouping similar search requests together;
 - identifying, using a semantic net hierarchy, a lowest-level term in the hierarchy that subsumes all of the queries in a grouping of search requests;
 - communicating the identified term to a user.
- [c2] 2. The method of claim 1 wherein the expanding is performed using a thesaurus.
- [c3] 3. The method of claim 1 wherein the expanding is performed using a semantic net comprising synonyms and super-terms.
- [c4] 4. A method for use with a system storing digital media records and comprising a search engine searching said stored digital media records, the method comprising the steps of:
- receiving search requests from users;
 - by the search engine, searches based upon the search requests, yielding respective search results, each search result defining selected digital media records, the digital media records each having associated metadata;
 - logging the search results and the metadata associated with digital media records selected therein;
 - expanding the metadata, defining expanded query metadata results;
 - applying a statistical clustering algorithm, thereby grouping similar expanded query metadata results together;
 - identifying, using a semantic net hierarchy, a lowest-level term in the hierarchy that subsumes all of the expanded query metadata results in the grouping of expanded query metadata results;

communicating the identified term to a user.

- [c5] 5. The method of claim 4 wherein the expanding is performed using a thesaurus.
- [c6] 6. The method of claim 4 wherein the expanding is performed using a semantic net comprising synonyms and super-terms.
- [c7] 7. A method for use with a system storing digital media records and comprising a search engine searching said stored digital media records, the method comprising the steps of:
receiving search requests from users;
performing, by the search engine, searches based upon the search requests, yielding respective search results, each search result defining selected digital media records or being empty;
logging the search requests for which the search result is empty;
expanding the logged search requests;
applying a statistical clustering algorithm to the logged search requests, thereby grouping similar search requests together;
communicating a group of search requests to a user.
- [c8] 8. The method of claim 7 wherein the expanding is performed using a thesaurus.
- [c9] 9. The method of claim 7 wherein the expanding is performed using a semantic net comprising synonyms and super-terms.
- [c10] 10. A method for use with a system storing digital media records and comprising a search engine searching said stored digital media records, the system permitting user expressions of interest in particular stored digital media records, the method comprising the steps of:
search requests from users;
performing, by the search engine, searches based upon the search requests, yielding respective search results, each search result defining selected digital media records;
logging the search requests for which a user has expressed interest in a

selected digital media record;
expanding the logged search requests;
applying a statistical clustering algorithm to the logged search requests,
thereby grouping similar search requests together;
communicating a group of search requests to a user.

[c11] 11. The method of claim 10 wherein the expanding is performed using a thesaurus.

[c12] 12. The method of claim 10 wherein the expanding is performed using a semantic net comprising synonyms and super-terms.

[c13] 13. The method of claim 10 wherein a user expressing interest in a selected digital media record comprises the user placing the selected digital media record into an online shopping cart.

[c14] 14. The method of claim 10 wherein a user expressing interest in a selected digital media record comprises the user purchasing rights to use the selected digital media record.

[c15] 15. The method of claim 10 wherein a user expressing interest in a selected digital media record comprises the user placing the selected digital media record into an online projects folder or other work space.